

Troy, Indiana
Anderson River

DRAWER 3 YOUTH - INDIANA

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Abraham Lincoln before 1860

Troy, Indiana
Anderson River

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

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LINCOLN—A HOOSIER TROJAN YOUTH

The second annual series of Hoosier Historical Institutes are being conducted this summer in the form of week-end pilgrimages. The Schedule includes 74 historical site recitals delivered "on the spot." Five of these were held in the Lincoln country on Saturday, June 28, at which time the editor of Lincoln Lore was the guest speaker. The places visited were: The Lincoln Cabin Site, the Grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and the Abraham Lincoln Hall at Lincoln State Park; the Riverside Lincoln Memorial near Troy; the Flatboat Landing at Rockport; all in Spencer County, Indiana.

Considerable attention has been paid to Lincoln's experiences at the mouth of Anderson River close to Troy including his employment by James Taylor in the merchandise house and on the Ferry. Lincoln's putting the two men aboard the steamboat and his ferrying difficulty with the Dill brothers across the river are familiar traditions. Very little notice has been given to the influence which the town of nearby Troy must have had on Lincoln during the months he spent on the outskirts of the town in 1826 and 1827.

Anderson River in the Pioneer days was designated as a navigable stream and was the "most considerable stream" flowing into the Ohio between the Blue River and the Wabash. During the first decade of the nineteenth century settlements were made on either side of the river at its mouth where it flows into the Ohio and a crude ferry was operated across the narrow body of water. On the western bank of Anderson the Taylor family established themselves and on the eastern side of the river James McDaniel was the most prominent settler.

When Perry County was formed out of the county of Knox in 1814 commissioners were appointed to establish the county seat and the most available central location at that time seems to have been the McDaniel settlement. One hundred and twenty acres of land were offered as a gift by James McDaniel Sr. and his son, James Jr. as a site for the new seat of Justice. Some other donations of land and money were also made by citizens of the community and the new Perry County seat was named Troy. Who was responsible for reviving the name of the ancient maritime city at this time on the banks of the Ohio is not known. Francis Posey surveyed the town and ninety-six lots were laid off.

The first circuit court was held at Troy on July 3, 1815, the day before the "glorious Fourth" which was widely celebrated in the western country by the Revolutionary soldiers and their families who had settled there. For a time court was held in the home of the senior McDaniel and on November 6, 1815, there is an account of a court assembled in his home. It was not long however before Troy had constructed a new log courthouse. According to an *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Indiana* published in 1876, a newspaper was published at Troy in 1816 called the "Troy Gazette." Inasmuch as this paper is not listed in the *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers 1690-1820* just brought from the press its authenticity may be questioned. Troy, New York, had a newspaper called the "Gazette" which was suspended in 1812 while the traditional Troy, Indiana, paper by the same name is said to have started in 1816.

A United States Post Office was established at Troy in 1818 and Daniel Irwin was the first postmaster. He was succeeded by Ruben Bates in 1823. It was not unusual in the pioneer days of Indiana while she was still

a territory to look upon Vincennes as the central trading point on the Wabash and Troy the chief shipping point on the Indiana side of the lower Ohio.

The dividing of Perry County into smaller units spelt the doom of Troy as a county seat as three new counties were carved out of the boundaries by 1818 leaving her located on the extreme southwestern boundary. The following year the town of Rome also on the Ohio became the seat of justice in Perry County. However, Troy did not immediately lose her prestige as a shipping port. On a map of Indiana published by A. Finley of Philadelphia in 1819 the only cities shown on the Indiana side of the Ohio River between New Albany and Evansville are Northampton, Fredonia, Washington, Troy, Rockport and Darlington. A map by D. F. Robinson published as late as 1830 still shows Troy as the county seat.

Thomas Lincoln and his family moved into their new Indiana home in the fall of 1816 and crossed the river not far from Troy which was the county seat of the territory where their new home was located. Thomas Lincoln was probably attracted to this part of Indiana by the removal to Perry County of some of his Kentucky relatives who were serving on juries in Perry County the year before he arrived as their names appear on the records for 1815. One of these relatives was Austin Lincoln, a son of Capt. Hananah Lincoln who came to the Kentucky country with the President's grandfather in 1782. He is mentioned by Abraham Lincoln in a letter of Richard Lincoln written on April 6, 1860, as follows, "I remember long ago seeing Austin and Davis Lincoln, said to be sons of Hananah or Annanah, who was said to have been a cousin of my grandfather."

On his way back and forth to Troy from his home Thomas would pass near Austin Lincoln's. Even after Thomas Lincoln's home fell within the new boundary of Spencer, when that county was carved out of Perry in 1818, still Troy was his nearest trading point but sixteen miles away, while Rockport, the Spence country seat was nineteen miles, and Boonville twenty miles. During the entire residence of the Lincoln's in Indiana, Troy was the closest of the sizeable trading posts.

It appears that Abraham Lincoln first worked for several months at the mouth of Anderson River close to Troy when he was but 17 years old and returned again the following year for a short period. One can readily understand how much of his spare time would be spent at Troy where he would talk with the river navigators who resided there and listen to their stories of flatboat journeys fully as thrilling as any episodes told about seagoing vessels.

The following year he is also said to have spent some time near Troy when he constructed a small boat. On another occasion, a short distance west of Troy on the banks of the Ohio he worked several weeks cutting fuel for passing steamers. It is not strange that the time spent near Troy with its decidedly river atmosphere encouraged a trip to New Orleans when he was but nineteen. There is also the well established tradition that he had in mind accepting a job as a river hand on the Ohio but was dissuaded from leaving his father's home by his neighbor, William Wood. Some day we may learn more particulars about the influence exerted over this Trojan Hoosier youth by the town of Troy. A day spent at Troy was more exciting and impressive than a week in the Gentry's Store community near his home.



Abe Lincoln, at 17, Earned First Dollar Running 'Ferry' on Creek Near Troy

CANNELTON, FEB. 9—(Special)—A place of importance in Lincoln's life, and one revered by people of this area, is Lincoln Ferry Roadside Park on Anderson Creek near Troy. Here Lincoln spent nine months of his 17th year, in 1826-27, operating a ferry over what was then Anderson river. There was no bridge there then, and the creek was wide. Therefore people who wished to cross the river had to be ferried over it.

This site was brought into prominence by the late Ross Lockridge, Indiana University history instructor who influenced the Indiana State Highway Department to mark the site. Mr. Lockridge prepared the material printed on the tablet at the park.

According to the information on the tablet, Lincoln's wages as ferryman there were only 25 cents

per day. He earned an extra six cents a day because he was so proficient as a butcher.

Here he earned his first dollar. He told about it many years later when talking to a friend. "I was contemplating my new boat," he said, "and wondering whether I could make it stronger, when two men with trunks came down to the shore in a carriage and asked: 'Will you take us and our trunks out to the steamer?' 'Certainly,' I said.

Two Half Dollars

"I sculled them out to the boat. 'The steamer was about to leave when I called out to them, 'You forgot to pay me.' Whereupon they threw down two silver half dollars."

"I could scarcely believe my eyes—you may think it was a little thing and in these days it seems like a trifle, but it was the most important incident in my

life—I was a more hopeful boy from that time."

One of Lincoln's first experiences with the law grew out of his traffic with steamboats, according to the inscription on the tablet. A Kentuckian, John Dill, had a license to operate a ferry over the Ohio River. He brought Lincoln into the court of Samuel Pate, justice of the peace, at Lewisport, Ky. Dill charged that Lincoln was operating a ferry over the Ohio without a license. (The jurisdiction of Kentucky ran to low water mark on the Indiana shore.)

Lincoln's defense was that he only took passengers to the steam boats in mid-stream—that the boats would neither land nor wait. He maintained he did not operate a ferry because he did not "set them over the river" and for this

Kentucky did not require a license.

Gained Law Experience

The case was dismissed by Squire Pate. Afterward, Lincoln often visited his court to attend trials and here he gained experience in law.

The Ohio River made a profound impression on him and in his later years he said the Ohio River must not be considered a barrier between the North and South, but rather a connecting link.

Service clubs of three counties—Perry, Spencer and Dubois—have joined in publishing a folder on Lincoln-land pointing out to tourists the historic spots in the three-county area. Also listed are recreational facilities and hotel accommodations.

The clubs are Kiwanis of Cannelton and Tell City and the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Tell City.

A faint, light gray watermark of the Lincoln Memorial is visible in the background. The memorial's iconic columns and the top of the Lincoln statue are discernible.

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Frankness Once Saved Lincoln From Sentence in Kentucky

Justice of Peace Won By Young Boatman's Evident Sincerity

Evening Press. 4-19-28

ROCKPORT, Ind., April 28.—During the fall and winter of 1826 Abraham Lincoln worked for James Taylor on a ferry boat near Posey's landing at the junetion of Anderson creek and the Ohio river in Spencer county. For this hard work the lanky lad who later became president of the United States, received the sum of \$6 a month.

After a short return to his father's roof, the Ohio again called to the adventurous youth and he was soon back at Bates landing, a half mile below the mouth of Anderson creek, where he undertook to construct a scow or light flat-boat of his own.

It was young Lincoln's ambi-

tion to load this craft with Spencer county products and propel it down the Ohio and Mississippi to New Orleans. But he had no ready cash to buy a cargo. By carrying passengers and baggage out to the waiting boats in midstream he was able to eke out a living.

Once two men arrived at the landing in a carriage and they gave Lincoln two half-dollars to carry their belongings to the steamer. This experience gave him new courage and whenever opportunity came he would ferry passengers and baggage across the river, thereby unwittingly offending the law of Kentucky, as he soon found out.

One day, as he was moored to the Indiana shore, a call came to him from the Kentucky side. Lincoln answered and had no sooner landed his boat when he was set upon by the caller, John H. Dill, a ferryman, and his brother Lin.

They accused him of ferrying without license and threat-

ened to "duck" him in the river, but instead betook themselves with Lincoln to Samuel Pate, a farmer and justice of the peace. The Dill brothers swore out a warrant charging young Lincoln with running a ferry without a license.

Squire Pate listened to the complaint and the frank admission of guilt by the tall, youthful ferryman, clad in deerskin shirt, home-made jean breeches with coonskin cap in his big hand. The obvious sincerity of Lincoln evidently warmed the heart of the Kentucky squire and he soon dismissed the case on the grounds the Lincoln had not intended to violate a law of whose existence he had no knowledge.

LINCOLN SAYINGS

"The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll git me a book I ain't read."



